# CHAPTER ONE

## THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PROCESSES OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

I have now to take up the question of the significance of this genetic psychology of individual children for everyday educational issues; and, first, whether it has any relevance at all. I do not, however, need to make out a general case for considering the direct bearing of children's overt behaviour, descriptively viewed, upon educational technique. Few people nowadays need to be convinced that an understanding of children's overt interests and normal activities is an indispensable part of the equipment of the educator, and all that one has to do is to show the specific bearing of this and that particular fact. The question of the relevance of the *unconscious* significance of the child's behaviour, and the facts as to his sexual development, is, however, quite another matter. How far, and in what way, can the knowledge of the child's unconscious mind at different phases of his growth have any bearing upon the work of the mother, the nurse, the teacher in the nursery or infants' school (or, for that matter, the teacher of older children) ?

This is a question which has been variously considered by both educators and analysts, since the time when the work of Freud began to gain* general public notice. In the early days, many practising analysts inclined to the view that the new discoveries as to the child's development would in the end completely revolutionise educational purposes and practice. The public pronouncements of some analysts, indeed, almost took the line that every educator should leave all other pursuits and attachments and

devote himself to the study of analytic doctrine. Many educators, too, welcomed the new knowledge as giving them an altogether deeper insight into the children who are the subject of their work.

Those who held this view, of course, whether analyst or